

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 2397

As Passed House:
March 13, 2014

Title: An act relating to Medal of Honor special license plates.

Brief Description: Concerning Medal of Honor special license plates.

Sponsors: Representatives Seaquist, MacEwen, Orwall, Ryu, Morrell, Zeiger, Haler, Tarleton and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/27/14, 1/29/14.

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/13/14, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Allows registered owners who have been awarded the Medal of Honor to apply for Medal of Honor special license plates for use on up to three motor vehicles.
- Allows the Medal of Honor special license plates to be displayed on a vehicle where the Medal of Honor recipient is recorded as one of the registered owners.
- Removes "Congressional" in reference to the title of the medal.
- Allows registered owners who are eligible for the Medal of Honor special license plates to receive the fee exemptions associated with the Medal of Honor special license plates for regular issue license plates for more than three motor vehicles.
- Defines "Medal of Honor" as the military decoration awarded by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Paul Ingiosi (786-7114).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

In 1979 the Legislature authorized the creation of a Congressional Medal of Honor special license plate. Washington residents who have received the Congressional Medal of Honor may apply for the special license plate for display on a vehicle of which they are the registered owner through the Department of Licensing (DOL) by completing a military license plate application and submitting a letter of eligibility from the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) verifying that they have received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Under current law, the Congressional Medal of Honor special license plates must be issued for use on a single motor vehicle owned by the person who has received the Congressional Medal of Honor and without payment of vehicle license fees, license plate fees, and motor vehicle excise taxes. The plates must also be replaced, free of charge, if the plates become lost, stolen, damaged, defaced, or destroyed. The plates may be transferred, free of charge, from one motor vehicle to another owned by the Congressional Medal of Honor recipient upon application to the DOL, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the Director of the DOL.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

The bill allows registered owners who have been awarded the Medal of Honor to apply for Medal of Honor special license plates for use on no more than three motor vehicles. The Medal of Honor special license plates may be used on vehicles where the Medal of Honor recipient is recorded as one of the registered owners. Those owners who are eligible for the Medal of Honor plates and choose not to utilize them may receive the fee exemptions associated with the Medal of Honor special license plates for regular issue plates for no more than three vehicles.

Additionally, references to "Congressional" in the title of the medal are eliminated, and the bill provides a definition for the Medal of Honor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) In our state's history we have had 34 Medal of Honor recipients. Very few people are ever awarded the Medal of Honor; the simple purpose is to honor those people. The second purpose of the bill is to change the state's title of the medal. The local veterans' organization brought this issue forward after hearing from Medal of Honor recipients who were having difficulty getting more than one set of Medal of Honor special plates to display.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Seaquist, prime sponsor; and Jim Sims, Veterans Legislative Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.